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FYROM: Development of Political Parties

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Survey of Political Parties' Development

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[Editorial Report] On 22 January the Macedonian-language Skopje daily NOVA MAKEDONIJA begins an 18-part survey of the most important political parties in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) called, "Four Years Since the Formation of Political Parties in Macedonia."

Introduction

The series begins on page 3 with a 300-word unattributed introduction.

"Four years of a pluralistic political environment in Macedonia has provided the opportunity for some 60 parties to establish themselves. If such a number did not guarantee any particular quality in carrying out a struggle for power, it did testify unequivocably to the striving of the society for democratic change. Nine months before the second scheduled democratic elections are to be held, one can safely say that the political realm reflects the great number of events which have set the stage for these parties and account for their influence. From the parliamentary elections in November 1990, when about 20 political entities appeared in an organized way to contest in the first free democratic elections, through the establishing of the first multiparty republic-level assembly (in January 1991) and the formation of the new government of Nikola Kljusev (in March 1991), through the erasing of the designation 'socialist' from the name of the state and the affirmation of the referendum for a sovereign and independent state (September 1991), to the confirmation of the Constitution (November 1991), the number of parties has increased continually. Those already on the political scene fought for greater scope and for more adherents. The process continued after the adoption of the Declaration on International Recognition (December 1991), after the departure of the JNA [Yugoslav People's Army] from our country's territory (March 1992), after the admission to the United Nations in April 1993, and it appears that they will not lose their intensity from now until the November elections. However, the well-known characteristics of our political scene leave five or six parties in the forefront of the strivings of the citizens for more rapid democratization and a more successful economic and spiritual life in the Republic of Macedonia. In a few essays, we will presentanalyses of the development of these parties in the past few years, their positions on various topics, and the extent to which their initial program goals have remained consistent over time."

VMRO-DPMNE

In the first of a two-part (second part unavailable) 1400-word essay by Lilica Kitanovska in the 22 January issue on page 3, entitled "Uncompromising Attitude As a Boomerang," the VMRO-DPMNE (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) is examined.

"The VMRO-DPMNE is, without a doubt, the party that exemplifies the beginning of our new political era. From its own declaration, characterizing itself as 'a national party with comprehensive liberating national-patriotic and democratic aspirations, pledges, and preoccupations,' this party introduced and has continued to emphasize an insistence on polarity in the Macedonian political environment."

From the time of its founding, 17 June 1990, until today, the party has never accepted being counted as a "rightwing party," but it has fought primarily against the parties in the leftwing block. In the first multiparty elections, the VMRO-DPMNE gained 38 seats in the Assembly. This party, which acquired the sobriquet—"most Macedonian"—has as its overwhelming purpose: "the struggle for the restoration of the pride and worthiness of the Macedonian individual, the Macedonian people, and the Macedonian state." "Its program includes a plea for a confederation status in the Macedonian state as the only guarantee for a comprehensive Macedonian sovereignty and as a basic precondition for negotiations with neighboring countries for the unification of Macedonia.... And what does the VMRO-DPMNE mean by unification? According to its program, 'unification entails the complete spiritual, political, economic, and ethnic unification of the scattered Macedonian people and a state in a future united Balkan peninsula.'" There is some ambiguity over whether the VMRO-DPMNE fully recognizes the existing state borders.

The VMRO-DPMNE's attitude toward the non-Macedonian ethnic groups is not based on a developed philosophy. In its election platform, the party called for 'a future Macedonian state in which all national minorities and ethnic groups would be guaranteed the civil rights prescribed by international conventions.' "The VMRO-DPMNE suggested numerous amendments to the Constitution that conflicted with the preamble by suggesting a definition of the republic as a state of the Macedonian people, leaving out the enumeration of the minorities and the term nationalities and replacing it with the term national minorities. While most of these changes were not passed by the constitutional commission, Article 7, dealing with the official language, was an exception." The VMRO-DPMNE may have indirectly supported a spontaneous demonstration against the adoption of the Constitution and is suspected of not wanting the Constitution.

Ljupco Georgievski, the leader of the party, served briefly as Macedonia's vice president, but his resignation made it easier for him to assert the party's ideological goals. The party has not been able to compromise or participate in government effectively.

SDSM

The SDSM, the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia—the party's current name—is the subject of a two-part essay by Aleksandar Damovski. The first is a 900-word article appearing in NOVA MAKEDONIJA on 24 January on page 3, headlined "Promotion of Social Democracy." The second appears in the 25 January edition on page 3, 1,200 words, and is entitled "The Burden of Suitable and Unsuitable Hypotheses."

Responding to the general changes in political and economic systems, the League of Communists of Macedonia, which renamed itself the League of Communists—Party for Democratic Transformation, participated in the multiparty elections in November-December 1990, winning 220,759 votes, or 20.38 percent, and 31 seats (the current number is 28), in second place behind the VMRO-DPMNE. The party emphasized a civic concept of society and a slightly different approach to the minority question and human rights. The party also advocated a role for Macedonia as a confederative state within the community of Yugoslav peoples; equality of all citizens before the law; parliamentary democracy and a multiparty political life; the formation of bodies at the republic-level to oversee the process of reprivatization; secure prospects for private initiative; and adequate representation of the workers in the management bodies of the enterprises.

The party's influence and representation in the governments (half of the ministers, a prime minister, and the head of state) is disproportionate to its electoral success. This can be seen as a double-edged sword because it has also involved the party in great scandals, classical black-marketing, classical racketeering, conflicts of interest, and dubious import-export deals.

"In the SDSM program, it was written that 'an absolute priority will be given to privatization in the establishment of the new structure of ownership. The private structure is indispensible and should be present in all spheres of life.'" The party's secretary at the time of the second conference, Nikola Popovski (who is now the party's vice chairman) pointed out the dilemna involved in this policy since it conflicted with the party's traditional social goals; restituting land to former owners would leave many landless.

"In his speech at the meeting of the SDSM's central committee in December 1993, Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski claimed credit for Macedonia's achievements, especially international recognition. The country's progress was due to the party: 'If we speak of foreign policy, it is the foreign policy of President Kiro Gligorov; if we speak of the Constitution, it is the Constitution of Frckovski, Popovski, and Kitanovski; if we speak of privatization, it is the privatization of Jane Miljovski.'"

The SDSM evolved from a party trying to successively to preserve ties with Federal Yugoslavia, then a Yugoslav confederation, and finally an independent state. As far as the ethnic question is concerned, the party remains committed to the civic orientation exemplified in the Constitution. "According to Branko Crvenkovski: 'We know that the people want the Constitution to say that it is a state of the Macedonian nation, that they had another state, that they had a mother state....We know that that earns points and that it is the easiest way to reach voters, but we are consciously taking another path.'"

PDP

The Party for Democratic Prosperity, the PDP, is the subject of a two-part essay by Panta Djambazoski. "Formation in an Overly Sensitive Period," is the title of a 1,200-word essay appearing on 26 January, on page 3; "The Governing Coalition Alters the Activity," appearing in the 27 January issue on page 3, running 1,200 words, is the title of the second essay.

"The Party for Democratic Prosperity, headquartered in Tetovo, is the largest party of Albanians in our country. It was registered on 25 May 1990 and, like the Social Democratic Party of Macedonia, is a party with the longest official existence in the Republic of Macedonia after the breaking of the political party monopoly of the League of Communists. In fact, the party began to form itself much earlier with the gathering of the people who would lead political activity, and with the founding meeting of the PDP, which was convened on 14 April 1990 when the Law on Political Parties and Associations was passed. On the same day, in the village of Djepiste, the Assembly of the party was held. Nevzat Halili was elected chairman, and Mithat Emini secretary."

"The PDP is a civic party according to its program. The main party body is staffed with Albanians, but one of the founders of the party was the well-known Skopje lawyer, Dusko Apostolski. According to Chairman Halili, the purpose of the PDP was 'for a political party to confidently assert for the first time the colletive demands of Albanians, Muslims, Turks, and others for true equality and democracy.' However, as time passed and as new ethnic parties (of Turks, Muslims, Romanies, and others), the PDP has become a single ethnic party in its practice, activities, and membership and leaders."

The essay continues that at the time of the PDP's founding, there was a sense of euphoria among the Albanians as they participated in mass meetings. There was also a sharp division between those who were for it and those opposed to it. The PDP was also perceived as having as its only goal, a greater Albania, and its activism coincided with that of the nationalistic parties among Macedonians. "At the PDP's first congress in February 1992, Chairman N. Halili said that 'many extremist Macedonian political parties welcomed the founding of the PDP with accusations and denigration in the communist style....they were not for democracy ... but for the supremacy and hegemony of the Macedonian people.'"

The still unpublished PDP program calls for the complete political, economic, and ethnic rights and liberties of all people. "The party recognizes the territorial integrity of Macedonia, viewing it as a state of all national collectives, of all citizens—Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Muslims, Vlachs, Romanies, and others. The national collectives which have all the characteristics of a people [narod], such as history, territorial compactness, language, alphabet, culture, and tradition, should be thought of as a people and should have that 'constitutional status.' The PDP favors a free market economy; privatization, including private education; improvement of agriculture; emancipation of women; and the freedom of citizens to have a religion. The PDP advocates equality of languages and alphabets of the ethnic groups in all state bodies and institutions, and free instruction in the mother tongues. The PDP favors the complete integration of Albanians in Europe and demands the protection of the appropriate European institutions."

"In the first multiparty elections, the party won 22 seats; on average, for each seat, the party won 7,900 votes, and a total of 263,800 votes for all candidates. In the parliament, the PDP parliamentary group entered a coalition along with a single representative of the other Albanian party, the People's Democratic Party [Narodna Demokratska Partija, NPD]. Representative Djeladin Murati became one of the vice chairmen of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. During the interparty parliamentary negotiations, the PDP was dissatisfied because it got one vice chairmanship in the parliament and one ministry in the government, although it had demanded that at least one of the three primary positions in the three highest state bodies be given to the PDP, as well as at least three out of six deputy ministerial positions." After a year and a half, Branko Crvenkovski formed a party government, including the PDP as a coalition partner. The PDP received a deputy prime ministerial position in the government, five ministerial positions, and more deputy and assistant ministerial positions. "But there remains considerable discontent among the leaders of the party because of the still unfulfilled program goals. This is perhaps one of the reasons for the recent party split."

"The PDP began to build its political image with an expression of a certain degree of distrust and phobia toward the state and its institutions." That led the party to boycott the 1991 census, which now necessitates a new census. The boycott could be considered a big mistake by the PDP because a substantial portion of the population saw it as disloyalty to the state, even while the PDP began to participate in government."

Another decisive event was the referendum for political and territorial autonomy of Albanians in Macedonia. "In a formal sense, the PDP did not organize the referendum, but it did not oppose it. On the contrary, it explained that it would respect the will expressed by the people and would undertake a commitment to achieve autonomy. This position was espoused also at the PDP's congress. Afterwards came explanations to the effect that this prescription was not meant to be frightening; that it would be applicable only to th equal use of language and alphabet by Albanians wherever they might live in Macedonia. At the same time, there was an opposing view that this autonomy should be established literally and in classic institutions. It was also explained that, to the extent that the question of Albanians was not resolved, they would seek to constitute autonomy within the borders of Macedonia. Such an explanation was even given by the head of the parliamentary group, Muhamed Halili. In an interview with our newspaper, Secretary Mithat Emini explained that eventually autonomy would be achieved through the institutions of the Macedonian state. But for a member of the presidency, Mahi Nesimi, autonomy would be a 'strange condition' in which some Albanians would enjoy autonomy and others would remain outside it." It is precisely this issue that divides the leadership structures and has contributed to the current split.

"The PDP representatives did not vote for the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia; this is another argument of those who wish to see the party banned. But in any case, the democratic public was also irritated because this was the first constitution of an independent and sovereign Macedonia. That position taken by the parliamentary group was explained by Secretary Emini: 'The Albanians, believing that Macedonia was also their country, expected and endeavored to make the Constitution reflect their natural and legitimate right to be equal as a people in their country and to be a state-forming people.'" There were other disturbing signs, such as "N. Halili's recommendation at the 1992 Congress that Albania should not recognize Macedonia as long as Macedonia did not recognize Kosovo as a republic and the participation of M. Halili as a member of Albania's delegation at the 1993 CSCE meeting in Prague, at which the Albanians voted against the admission of Macedonia to the CSCE."

"The demands of the PDP could be summarized as follows: changing the Constitution; equal admission of Albanians to middle schools and opening the Pedagogical Department to Albanians; at least 4-5 hours of Albanian-language programming on Macedonian television; representation of Albanians at all levels in the state bodies; and a population census carried out under international supervision."

The author concludes that the tension between the PDP's goals as a party in the coalition and its role as an ethnic movement remains serious. It has contributed to the split between the "hard" faction, led by Menduh Thaqi, and the "soft" faction of the parliamentary representatives, ministers, and some members of the presidency. The PDP faces competition from the NPD and the Albanian Democratic Union - Liberal Party (ADS-LP).

Liberal Party

A two-part essay by Zoran Petrov appears in the 28 and 29 January editions of NOVA MAKEDONIJA, both on page 3. The first, 1,400 words, is entitled "At a Distance from Both Left and Right"; the second, 1,700 words, is headlined "In a Continual Misunderstanding with the Center."

"In many ways, one of the most specific and most characteristic party in the Macedonian pluralistic environment is the Liberal Party. The party built its own identity and image as a truly democratic, progressive force but has been unable to escape such accusations as 'imported,' 'faceless,' 'bureaucratic-managerial,' 'greedy for power,' and 'a party that was the prolonger of a defeated opposition in an already unstable Yugoslavia.'"

"On the other hand, the Liberals from their emergence until today have been in a latent but continual conflict with everything around them, constantly stressing that their proposals, ideas, and projects are being bypassed, that their contribution is being disregarded, or, in one word, they have been treated unfairly. The rivalry with its coalition partner the SDSM, which recently became more pronounced, represented a serious threat to the survival of the current government, but even the news media were not spared from accusations from the Liberals that they were under the influence of the SDSM. Thus, a seemingly contradictory situation developed within the Liberal Party itself. On the one hand, the 'fat rewards' required them to participate in the executive branch, especially in the three significant governing bodies (dealing with foreign affairs, economics, and health), and, on the other, they were constantly in a dissatisfied and critical mood toward that same government."

"In the Beginning Was Ante Markovic"

"The Liberal Party was founded on 5 October 1990 with the name and symbols identical to the then Union of Reformist Forces of Yugoslavia (SRSJ), under the leadership of SFRY [Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] Prime Minister Ante Markovic. At the time, it was obliged to distinguish itself from the SRSJ branches in Serbia, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Montenegro, and Vojvodina, so the Macedonians registered themselves as an autocephalous party and avoided formally introducing themselves as a 'daughter' from the center in Belgrade; they would not just exist as a Yugoslav political substitute. However, the influence that the then Yugoslav prime minister exerted through this party was unambiguous, not only as the father of the SRSM [Party of Reformist Forces of Macedonia] program and its clear economic orientation, but also without a doubt vis-a-vis the electoral body in Macedonia where Markovic visited several times during the election campaign. The indisputable fact is that the popularity of the leader of the Federal Executive Council led directly to the electoral success of the SRSM, resulting in the seating of 18 representatives from this party in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. As is known, Markovic soon fell from power, and the SRSM was left alone to establish, defend, and propagate its political identity and image in new conditions. It is noteworthy that only in Macedonia, where the reformists had gained the greatest number of seats in the republic-level parliament, did the reformists survive, whereas in the other former Yugoslav republics, they suffered a complete fiasco.

"It is interesting that in the first elections, this party performed favorably in Kavadarci, where it captured all three seats; in Negotino, it won one seat; in Kocani and in Stip, two out of three seats respectively; in Bitola, the party won three out of nine seats; one seat each in Prilep, Kumanovo, and Venica; and in Skopje, the SRSM won three out of 32 electoral districts. It should be remembered that the SRSM had entered an electoral coalition with the Young Democratic-Progressive Party, whose leader was Risto Ivanov, and with a certain Association of Artisans from Stip. The SRSM's definitive assimilation into a political party came at the first annual assembly in July 1991 when the party renamed itself: Reformist Forces of Macedonia - Liberal Party (RSMLP). With respect to the electoral results, we can see another curious phenomenon. Namely, it is currently the only group in the Macedonian parliament whose number has grown—by one member (from its ranks only Djulistana Markovska left, while Blagoja Ckartovski and Dimitar Trpenovski joined them); in any case, this is an indicator of the internal stability and cohesion of the party.

"Otherwise, the final defining of the party that introduced the completed phase of its maturation came at last year's regular assembly in June when the RSMLP decisively launched its new name: Liberal Party of Macedonia. This step was logically followed by the so-called New Between-Elections Program of the Liberal Party; this is the completed elaboration of the party's initial program."

"Firmly for Strengthening the Economy"

"An unambiguous accomplishment of the LP, which is in fourth place in terms of numbers in the Macedonian parliament, is its favorable position in the government. Besides the position of chairmanship of the Assembly, which is held by party leader Stojan Andov, the LP members of the government are: Stevo Crvenkovski, foreign minister; Gordana Siljanovska, minister without portfolio; Petrus Stefanov, minister of the economy; and Jovan Tofovski, minister of health. In addition, there are four deputy ministers from the LP in the ministries of internal affairs, development, science, and culture. Until his resignation a little over a month ago, Risto Ivanov held the position and functions of a deputy prime minister in the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. All of this showed that the party had a place and a strong need to actively participate in the government and to share in Macedonia's internal and external policies. It is characteristic of this party that, while it is perhaps an active initiator of new ideas and projects, this

is the feature that leads to misunderstandings and disputes with its coalition partners."

The LP's program has become more precise over time, but its basic orientation toward a democratic process, civic rights, and economic development on the basis of private ownership and the market. "The party has begun to delineate five overarching goals:

"1. Realization of the Macedonian state's turn toward the establishment of free, equal, economic and political empowerment of citizens and individuals;

"2. Restoration of the social system on the basis of the civic status of the individual;

"3. Europeanization and global modernization of Macedonia's productive, economic, social, and cultural models and ways of life;

"4. Establishment of a strong, highly productive, and efficient economy which, through private and collective enterprise and market mechanisms, will be included on an equal basis in the world market and in European integration;

"5. Restoration of a single Macedonian cultural-ethnic sphere through the opening of borders and the democratization of relations in the Balkans, as well as the resolution of the question of national rights and status of the Macedonian people in neighboring countries, and the internationalization of this question."

The author says that the LP has attempted out of necessity to portray itself as a party of the center, keeping a "hygienic distance" from the nationalists and ultra-leftist parties. While the LP thinks that it represents the true interests of the Macedonian people, opinion polls show that the popularity of this party is falling steadily. Despite the LP's standing as a serious political exponent and generator of ideas, its representatives have been accused of "flirting with the opposition" in some discussions and some votes in the parliament.

"Serious Conflict With the Ministry of Internal Affairs"

Two issues particularly concerned the LP after it entered a governing coalition with the SDSM, the PDP, and the SP, Socialist Party. One was to transform the Public Accounting Service. According to the author, the PDP regarded this quasi-government organization as an impediment to privatization. This position, however, led to difficulties within the coalition and public criticism that the LP was simply trying to protect its enterprises and directors. The second issue that led to poor relations among the coalition partners was connected with transforming the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVR), which the LP viewed as "an institution, in form, staffing, and structure a legacy from the old concept of the 'real socialist state.' Further, the police exert great influence in the shaping of political life and the 'creation' of a polical atmosphere in the economy, in some political parties, and even in some news media establishments." The dispute between the LP and the MVR reached its culmination last September when the LP abstained from voting during the interpellation concerning the work of Internal Affairs Minister Frckovski.

The article continues, relations among the coalition members had come under strain even earlier. For example, in an interview with the Belgrade daily BORBA, Stojan Andov said, "'The democratic processes in Macedonia are at a standstill.'" He supported that position by noting that the systemic laws required by the Constitution were being postponed. "Later, in a 16 November interview with NOVA MAKEDONIJA, Andov said, 'We think that the relationship with our party is inadmissably bad. Their pushing us to one side is a factor and our people have been suspicious of some basic measures. Such a strategy was developed by those circles in the SDSM that have been endeavoring to get rid of the Liberal Party. They believed that the Macedonian voters should be divided into those whose views are to the extreme right and those who are social democrats!'" The struggle continued from July to the first of October, and the public became convined that there was a serious conflict between the coalition partners, as well as quarrels over leadership positions in the ministries and directorships, including those in the mass media, and finally, a symptom of a profound government crisis.

"Someone Is Profiting From Us"

The article continues that the LP has also had internal conflicts, but has been characteristically lucky in that they have not attracted much attention from the public. For example, assembly representative Djulistana Markovska left the party after accusing party leader Andov of absolutism and of working exclusively with a small clique. Last August, Andov was also involved in a scandal involving an accident with an official Mercedes on the Skopje-Tetovo road and the subsequent police disclosures about the incident.

Moreover, the LP became the center of attention in the confrontation between Zoran Krstevski, the director of the public enterprise "Makedonija" for airport services and coordinator of the LP parliamentary group, and Antoni Pesev, then Minister of Urban Planning, Construction, Communications, Transportation, and Ecology. The dispute concerned supplies of aviation fuel. One of five bidders was the company of Risto Gusterov, a member of the leadership committee of the LP and a well-known businessman. According to a memorandum prepared for Minister Pesev, the choice of Gusterov would be prohibited unless the required management committee of a public enterprise was formed. After Krstevski openly expressed his opposition to excluding Gusterov's private company, the minutes of the meeting compiled by the Ministry, which were then leaked, showed that the Liberals, through their influence in "Makedonija" were attempting to evade the government's policy.

The author mentions another scandal, involving former Deputy Prime Minister Risto Ivanov, who was also a member of the highest leadership body of the LP. Ivanov

wrote a letter to the township public prosecutor and the district court in Skopje II last September, "requesting to be informed about the process of a criminal case, as well as the basis for the arrest warrant against a judge from the district economic court in Skopje, who was accused of taking a bribe. In his reply, the chairman of the court expressed constrernation about the tone of Ivanov's letter, reminding him of the constitutional separation of powers among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Only a few days later, Minister of Justice Tuse Gosev repeated the judge's argument, characterizing the entire proceeding as a result of 'Deputy Prime Minister Ivanov's legal ignorance.'" This led to Ivanov's resignation.

"Despite the disagreements, confrontations, and affairs, the LP should be seen as a real and potentially active political factor in the country with a clear ideological perspective. Its motto—the adept will succeed with us—is attractive to a great number of well-known intellectuals, successful businessmen, and entrepreneurs who have joined its ranks." The LP is also the only party in Macedonia which is accepted internationally, being a member of the Federation of European Liberal, Democratic, and Reform Parties. As far as the approaching elections are concerned, Stojan Andov relies on the electorate's intelligence. He views "the disinformation against the LP as evidence that certain circles in the country are frightened by the party's prospects in the coming election." Despite this, Andov says that an electoral coalition with the Social Democrats is possible since both parties support the democratic development of Macedonia.

Socialist Party

A two part essay by Emil Sterjevski appears on 30 and 31 January, both on page 3—the 1,000-word "From a Union to a Transformed Party," and the 800-word "Is It Hard To Be A Coalition Partner?"

"Many dilemnas have followed the transformation of the 'broadest front of the progressive forces' of the working people of Macedonia into the Socialist Party of Macedonia." One basic problem was the fact that many of its members were simultaneously connected with the League of Communists. There was also a problem of collective membership and the difficulty of deciding whether to be a party or a movement.

"Discontinuity or..."

Kiro Popovski, chairman of the Socialist Party of Macedonia, SP, refers to the "deep roots and tradition" of socialism, going back 100 years to the time of Delcev, Glavinov, and Karev, as well as the days of the People's Liberation Front during World War II. On 28 September 1990, at the founding meeting in Skopje, the party adopted the compromise name, Socialist Union - Socialist Party, and a draft program, statute, and emblem was chosen for the elections. "In the first multiparty parliamentary elections, the SP ran and won four seats independently, and won one seat in conjunction with the Union of Reformist Forces of Macedonia, and one seat with the cooperation of the Party for the Complete Emancipation of the Romanies. Their share in the parliament thus amounted to five percent of the total. That is also the share that it has in the governing coalition; it also has 12 percent of the total members of local assemblies in the Republic." In that parliamentary election campaign, the SP promoted the idea of "'a sovereign and democratic Macedonian state as an equal economic, political, and social entity in Yugoslavia, in the Balkans, and in Europe.'" Between the first and second rounds of the election, the SP agreed to a cooperative arrangement with the Union of Reformist Forces.

At its June 1991 congress, Popovski reaffirmed the view that the only choice was a democratic way to discuss a new Yugoslavia, as an association of equal republics as sovereign states. There was sharp criticism of nationalist tendencies and the misuse of patriotic feelings by various parties in their promotional efforts. "'Macedonia should be seen as a nation-state of the Macedonian people and the common homeland of all citizens. Multiethnic relations imply ethnic and religious toleration.'"

Unlike other parties, the author says the SP has not had internal disputes. Membership has been relatively stable.

He continues, the SP is the smallest and most loyal member of the governing coalition, but it has sometimes been left out of negotiations among the partners. The SP's share in government positions is one deputy chairmanship in the Assembly and one minister in the government.

The SP has recently sketched out its version of privatization, calling for 20 percent of the shares of the enterprises to be given free of charge to the respective workers. The SP's problem is how to overcome its faceless image and to sharpen its distinctiveness as a party of the left, while remaining amenable to a coaltion of the center, occupied by the SDSM and LP. It eshews nationalism as a retrograde phenomenon.

Labor Party

A 1,300-word article by Emil Sterjevski appears in the 1 February issue on page 3, entitled "Results Better Than Investment." Sterjevski writes, continuing the tradition of the workers' movement, the Labor Party (RP) emerged as a new party in 1990. In the first multiparty elections, it won 3.4 percent of the vote, which was below the threshold for entering the parliament. Despite the class connotations of its name, the RP did not use aggressive rhetoric in its election campaign, nor has it resorted to such language since then in its press communiques.

On 24 June 1990, the RP held its initial assembly. It waited until August to register officially. According to its statute, the RP should hold its next party congress in June 1994. Krste Jankoski, the party leader, says that the

RP began its political activity with no supplies, infrastructure, or personnel. By making the best of minimal means in the election campaign, the RP came out surprisingly well. Jankoski claims that the membership is stable and well distributed in terms of levels of education. The majority of the members are those who have been the most marginalized and hurt by the so-called transition period; they are also from the middle and lower social strata.

"The RP, in fact, does not appear attractive for the reasons mentioned above." Yet, it was one of the few parties which in the beginning was not preoccupied with the controversial issue of Macedonian statehood and nationality. "In its program, which has remained unchanged since the elections, the RP considered the inviolability of the territorial sovereignty of Macedonia as follows: 'The RP pledges itself to Macedonia as a common homeland of equal citizens and communities, regardless of whether they live in Macedonia or anywhere else in the world.' At that time, the party favored a 'Yugoslavia as a federation and community of free and sovereign peoples who should consensually and equally determine the bases for a common life....'" The RP supported the referendum on independence. Its position on the ethnic issue favors the conception of a civic state, rather than a purely national one and the protection of the rights of minorities according to international conventions.

"In July 1992, as well as in July 1993, the RP organized meetings under the provocative slogan: 'We have nothing tell the government.' The meetings elicited varying reactions from the public and political entities and also led to internal friction. The deputy chairman and some of his supporters registered a new party with the name, Labor Party of Macedonia."

Along with its priority on fairness to workers, the RP is against what it calls "'the unprincipled privatization of socially-owned capital, its destruction, and plundering without an accounting to its initiators.'" The RP is not against privatization per se, however. It opposes "neoliberal" privatization schemes that it views as leading to a Latin American type society with a small minority of wealthy people and an impoverished majority.

The author concludes that the RP appears to have a stable core of support—about 2.9 percent according to BriMa polls. Its expectations for the coming election are slim, however.

Democratic Party of Turks

The 2 February issue of NOVA MAKEDONIJA carries a 1,000-word article by Aleksandar Danovski on page 4, headlined "An Association Is Transformed Into a Party."

"The beginning of political organizations among the ethnic groups in the country following the trend—one party, one people—produced something unique when it involved the Turks." The Turks already were organized in a Democratic Union of Turks (DST), which was removed from the register as a civic organzation on 17 July 1992. On 16 October 1992, it registered as a political party under the name, Democratic Party of Turks. Its leader was Erdogan Sarac.

The party soon came to public attention through its role in the dispute over education in the Turkish language in the town of Zupa, in Debar township. On 8 April 1993, the party complained of discrimination and called on Turks to resettle in Turkey if conditions did not improve. Some local problems were described as tantamount to a "'genocide of the Turks in Macedonia.'"

At the same time, however, the DPT called on the Turkish minority to support the referendum for a sovereign and independent state, the new constitution, and the process of recognition. The party also appealed for the resolution of problems through dialogue and through institutions in the system in keeping with the Turkish community's traditions of tolerance and peacefulness.

Toward the end of 1993, there was an internal dispute over allegations of mistakes by Serac and others in the party leadership. The DPT's meeting was closed to journalists, and Serac claims that there was complete agreement about the party's leadership.

Movement for All-Macedonian Action

A 1,300-word article by Emil Sterjevski appears on page 4 entitled "The Program Achieved, the Members Lost."

"One of the first political parties to appear on the pluralistic political scene was the Movement for All-Macedonian Action—MAAK. In addition to its name, the lion as a protective symbol, and a political program, MAAK behaved very radically. The public was simply divided when the question arose over sympathy toward a party with such a nationalistic orientation. MAAK was registered in the first half of June 1990, and, at about that point, there was talk about two parties—MAAK and the League for Democracy—attracting and dividing Macedonia's intelligentsia along nationalistic or civic lines."

"MAAK defined itself as th fatherland party of the Macedonians and of all citizens of Macedonia 'regardless of their social, ethnic, or religious adherence, who accept the Proclamation and the Program Declaration and Manifesto of MAAK for a Free, Independent, and Sovereign Macedonia.' The Movement for All Macedonian Action came forward with the position that 'the Macedonian people will not permit themselves to be seduced in games whose goal is the re-establishment of some abbreviated, asymmetrical Yugoslavia;' this was contained in its program before the parliamentary elections. The party considered 12 August 1913 [the date of signing of the Treaty of Bucharest, dividing Macedonia among Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria] as the day of the Macedonian national catastrophe."

"For MAAK, 1990 was the year of 'political action.' After its founding assembly at which only a working presidency was elected (February 1990), members of a National Committee were elected one month later, and on 2 August - Ilinden [St.Elias's Day, anniversary of the 1903 uprising against the Turks] in Prohor Pcinjski, the Manifesto for a Free, Independent and Sovereign Macedonia was proclaimed. MAAK also demanded the withdrawal of our specialists from Kosovo and the departure of the JNA. In Prilep, they commemorated the anniverary of the death of Metodija-Andonov-Cento, and in Ohrid, they marked the 1000th anniversary of the Samuil Kingdom."

"A year later, MAAK held the second part of its assembly and proclaimed the Declaration on the Demilitarization of the Republic of Macedonia. The result of all these signs of incongruence with mainstream views was a fiasco - not a single seat in parliament, but representation in almost half of the opstina councils. Some parties could have been satisfied with those results, but not the proud Movement for All Macedonian Action."

"On 12 November 1990, the so-called National Front, comprising MAAK, VMRO-DPMNE, the People's Party, and the Agrarian Party, was formed. This turned out to be a tactical mistake for MAAK because the party had assumed that it could set policy for the Front." MAAK also suffered from internal contradictions, especially over the arrival of U.S. soldiers as part of the UNPROFOR in 1993, which was at odds with MAAK's views on demilitarization.

In September 1992, MAAK began a campaign to collect signatures for a petition calling for early parliamentary elections. The party got 128,000, to which the VMRO-DPMNE was supposed to add 30,000 in order to reach the 150,000 stipulated by the Constitution. Little seems to have come of this effort. MAAK appears to be losing members to other parties, particularly the VMRO-DPMNE and the Democratic Party.

MAAK's position on the ethnic Albanian question is described by Deputy Chairman Levko Djambazovski: "'The Macedonian people in their own state should restore the relationship between the state and the minority. But the minority does not feel any attachment to the state; they only demand rights. They should enjoy all the rights that minorities are accorded by international conventions, but rights are founded on reciprocity. The Constitution should be respected. If something should be changed, the Macedonian people should change it if they consider that necessary. Changes made because of dictates from outsiders, especially from blood enemies of the country would mean trampling the dignity of the people and demonstrating the immaturity of the state." As yet, MAAK does not have a developed economic platform, but it tends to favor support for the agricultural sector.

Party for the Full Emancipation of Romanies (PCERM)

In a 1,400-word article on 4 February by Lilica Kitanovska on page 4, entitled "Party for Social Emancipation," the author writes: "In its election program, the Party for the Full Emancipation of Romanies [Gypsies] stated that the party has a profoundly humane and democratic Macedonian and Yugoslav character, that it would share equally in government, and that it is prepared for a dialogue with all progressive forces, as well as to support changes in the economy and the programs of the Federal Government of Yugoslavia. PCERM would also struggle for a better life for the unemployed and for the stability of Macedonia and Yugoslavia within the borders of Europe, and vice versa! This is only part of the confused way of presenting its demands for a place in the sun under the new democratic conditions with which the Romanies rushed about, demonstrating their lack of preparedness while strongly showing their desire to seize the initative. However, as Faik Abdi, the popular representative and leader of the PCERM says: 'It was very difficult to persuade Romanies to join the party. According to Abdi, the Romanies were afraid of parties; they thought they would be sent to prison for forming a party! They were convinced that someone should defend them, teach them, identify things for them....So, that is why we formed the PCERM. We explained to them that, after a protracted analysis, we had come to the conclusion that we are the most backward part of the population and that no one would undertake to integrate us into the social mainstream without distinguishing where we live.'"

"Thus, in the second half of 1990, the first party of Romanies was formed, but up until the elections, it was unable to develop additonal structures. There were only some branches in Skopje and its suburbs, Tetovo, Gostivar, Debar, and Kumanovo. According to Abdi, it was determined that the Romanies were the most illiterate, the most frequent users of public welfare, the earliest to marry, and, all in all, the Romanies needed a genuine struggle for emancipation."

"PCERM mainly saw emancipation through improving living standards." It proved difficult to make progress in this area. However, Abdi could point to some success. "For the first time in history, Romanies were brought into the constitution of a state, and not as an ethnic group or national minority, but as a nation which lived along side with the Macedonians and could consider the country as its homeland." The significance of this step was lost on some people who, criticizing PCERM's passivity, formed another party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

According to Kitanovska, conflicts between the two Romany parties concerned the use of flour donated by enterprises and distributed by Abdi, who was accused of absolutist tendencies and of diverting some of the charity. The DPP also thought that Abdi's solution to the

introduction of bilingual education for Romanies meant acquiescence in the slow pace of change.

Up to now, PCERM has generally adhered to official government policy. As its only representative in the assembly, Abdi has earned the sobriquet "cushion" because he steers a course between the government and the nationalist opposition. "Not so much by the force of his arguments, as by his desire to calm the passions of the opponents, Faik Abdi has often succeeded in cutting the discussions, which because of their sterility should be relegated to the background."

"The best demonstration of the loyalty of this party to Macedonia is its support for the referendum in which it mobilized 98.3 percent of the Romany electorate to vote. However, that positive aspect of the PCERM was interrupted by the party's indulgence in talk of a new state with the name Romanistan in March 1993. In a letter sent to Butrus Butrus-Ghali, there was a call for an order creating an area in which Romanies from all over the world could find a home where they would be welcome." To date, PCERM has not officially renounced this idea, which seemed justified in its view by the merciless genocide of the past, but the party has nothing against the current residence of the Romanies in Macedonia.

The writer asserts that a final cause of friction between PCERM and "non-Romanies" concerns the number of members of this ethnic group in Macedonia. PCERM claims that there are no less than 220,000, while the 1991 census put the number at 52,000. PCERM explains the discrepancy as a result of the mistrust of Romanies toward Macedonian census takers and the Romanies' lack of organization. The Romanies were also said to have accepted the officials' description of them in exchange for paved roads in their neighborhoods. PCERM deserves credit, however, for its moderation since it is essential that the Romanies be integrated into society. It is also significant that the agreement with the German state of Nordrhein-Westfalen for the resettlement of Gypsies who claimed asylum in Germany also puts the Romanies in a position to put forward their demands.

Although the PCERM now has a membership of 36,000, Abdi worries about the divisive effect of elections and the spawning of new parties trying to attract the Romany constituency. Despite this danger, he forecasts a parliamentary group of six or seven Romany representatives in the new Assembly. As to whether PCERM would have a working alliance with the Socialist Party again, things appear less certain. According to Abdi, PCERM would ally with those parties which can contribute to the realization of PCERM's goals.

League for Democracy

A 1,300-word article by Zoran Petrov, entitled "Neither Communism Nor Nationalism—Democracy Here," was included in the 3 February edition on page 4.

Petrov says that the League for Democracy made its debut on the pluralistic stage with great pomp and attracted the cream of intellectual and progressive civic circles. It is the only political organization that does not fit into the scheme of these essays since its existence ended 10 months ago. However, from the standpoint of its significance, influence, and contribution to the development of democracy in Macedonia, the League has earned respect and a distinctive place in Macedonian political life.

On 21 November 1989 the party's platform was made public, and on 11 February 1990 the constituent assembly of the League for Democracy was convened in Skopje. The party was registered on 8 July 1990. It held its first congress on 21 November 1992. It was disbanded in May 1993. Although the League failed to gain representation in parliament, it was active outside the Assembly and demonstrated its interest in participating in the creation of Macedonia's domestic and foreign policies.

"Eschewing Wooly Language"

The League's enduring image was that of a classic, or old-fashioned, civic party, non-nationalistic, self-critical, not secretive, and responsible in its internal operations. It was also anti-communist and focused on the ideal of Macedonia as a state governed by rule of law. Along with its demands for denationalization of property, the League advocated the return of church property to the Macedonian Orthodox Church, privatization of socially-owned property, local self-government, changing the name and symbols of the Macedonain state from the socialist ones, and reform of the criminal code. According to its 29 June 1990 platform, the League was also the first to suggest rehabilitation and restitution for those sentenced by the Communists and for the principle of reciprocity in relations with neighboring countries.

Despite all this, the first parliamentary elections were a fiasco for the League even in the first round. With the exception of two or three candidates, no one received the required number of votes for the run-off. The League won one seat on the local council in Sveti Nikole. The party filed complaints to the Supreme Court concerning the electoral process, citing especially procedures in Kumanovo and Kratovo. The League managed to bring these problems to the attention of the public and to induce the prosecution of a case involving financial irregularities during the campaign on behalf of the SKM-PDP, SPM, and SRSM.

"The League was also the first party to publish its positions, ideas, and recommendations in its own newspaper, DEMOKRATSKI FORUM, the first issue of which appeared on 29 June 1990." The party's public image was greatly influenced by its chairman Djordji Marjanovic, a professor of criminal law at Skopje University's Law Department, who criticized the government and certain conditions and tendencies in the country in a forthright manner and without mincing

words. His description of the current governing coalition as "'a politically contradictory debachery of the Macedonian crypto-communists and Albanians nationalists'" is now famous.

In the fall of 1992, in two of three parliamentary by-elections, the League did surprisingly well. In the 111th district in the Skopje region of Centar, League candidate Aleksandar Tortevski came in second after Nikola Popovski of the SDSM, and ahead of VMRO-DPMNE and LP candidates. The League's candidate placed third in the 90th district in Gazi Baba. Despite these signs of popularity, the League disbanded itself half a year later.

"Last Stop: The Democratic Party"

As Marjanovic explained in the July 1993 issue of DEMOKRATSKI FORUM, the League for Democracy merged with the Petar Gosev's Democratic Party, sacrificing its individuality and centrist orientation for the sake of the evolution of a rule-of-law state and for the well-being of the Macedonian people. The Democratic Party was formed in April 1993 by Petar Gosev, former chairman of the SKM-PDP who left its successor organization the SDSM. In addition to the League, the Ilinden Free Democrats, who had left the VMRO-DPMNE; the Party of the Greens; and the Revival Party of Ohrid joined the Democratic Party. The League contributed six people to the 15-member Republic Council of the DP. The Democratic Party, led by three representatives on the Republic Council—Petar Gosev, Mihail Panovski, and Risto Jovanov, is actively preparing for the November elections.

NPD

Penta Djambozoski is the author of a 1,200-word essay appearing on page 4 on 6 February, entitled "In the Shadow of the Ethnic Brother."

"The People's Democratic Party, headquartered in Tetovo, was registered on 1 August 1990, and its constituent assembly was held a fews days before on Sunday when Iljaz Halimi was elected chairman and Ibrahim Bedredin secretary." The party's activity is intended to promote the ethnic demands of the Albanians in Macedonia and to establish their status as a state-forming people." The NPD is almost universally considered radical even when compared to the largest ethnic Albanian party, the PDP. It is important not to minimize the significance of the NPD on the Macedonian political scene because it achieved notable results in the first multiparty elections. The NPD entered the Macedonian parliament with one seat in the PDP-NPD coalition and with a significant number of representatives in the city councils in Skopje, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Gostivar, Debar, Kicevo, and Struga, where it is in a coalition with the PDP. Indeed, the NPD's political and party activism did not perhaps meet a corresponding interest from the public, thus extending a hand to the mass-based PDP was a necessity for the party to have a more influential role on our political scene."

Djambozoski writes, in general, it should be noted that the NPD has not been careless, particularly in dealing with the most essential questions, such as relations with key government bodies and arguments over the status of Albanians. It has, however, been sharply critical of the government. "Under the guidance of the NPD and PDP, the 1991 census and the Referendum on the Future of Macedonia were boycotted by the Albanian minority. The NPD asserted that the number of Albanians in Macedonia amounted to somewhere around 40 percent of the entire population. But this party reacted even more sharply with respect to the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia than its arguments in favor of a tolerant dialogue seemed to imply. With uncompomising and strident language, the NPD depicted the Constitutional Commission as 'a tailor of the Serbian agenda in Macedonia,' compared living conditions in Macedonia (at any rate those of Albanians) with those in Serbia, and set forth the prognosis that 'the Constiution will be the obituary for the Republic of Macedonia.'" From the beginning of its activities, the NPD placed great hopes in the courts and in the international community, which "'would treat Macedonia as it had Serbia'" with respect to human rights.

"Evaluating the Program"

"In 1992 the Constitutional Court of Macedonia had many interesting but complicated tasks to perform in reviewing the constitutionality of the party's program, that is, the Political Declaration of the NPD." Besides the question of deciding whether that Declaration predated the Constitution. There was also the problem of whether toleration of dissent included changing the political system in a legal way. "Considering that the declaration contained terms such as genocide, assimilation, and terror, a determination had to be made concerning whether the declaration's intent was to achieve the status of Albanians as a people on the way to political agreement or a decision to seek a common ethnic association and the formation of a single Albanian state in the Balkans!" That would be contrary to Article 20, Paragraph 3 of the Constitution, but the Constitutional Court did not attack the NPD, suggesting instead that it alter the program.

"A year and a half later, the NPD proposed a definition of Macedonia as a state of equal citizens with a bicameral parliament and the possibility of it becoming a federation. This suggestion was placed in the context of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia in Geneva. The NPD decided in favor of a democratic and sovereign state of citizens and equal nations—the Macedonian and the Albanian—with other nationalities and ethnic groups living there. Certainly, the position of the NPD with respect to the status of the Republic of Macedonia on the international level should be remembered: the NPD was against Macedonia's recognition and admittance to the CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe]. This was at the same time

the Republic of Albania justified its blocking of Macedonia's CSCE membership because of the 'inequality of the Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia.'"

"A Dose of Populism"

"At about that time, the NPD sent an open letter to the President of the Republic of Macedonia Kiro Gligorov with the observation that 'the faith of Albanians living in Macedonia in state institutions, including that of the republic's presidency, will soon disappear entirely' because of the disregard for the justified demands of the Albanians. The element of populism in the political behavior of this party and demonstrated in this letter is striking because it is addressed to all Albanians. When the issue of the constitution came up, the NPD proposed and supported a draft for cantonization and repeatedly denied the statement that 'the Albanians do not demand autonomy.'" It is also notable that the NPD does not issue statements in the name of its members, but in the name of Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia, despite the existence of the PDP and the Albanian Democratic Union - Liberal Party.

The NPD views the affair of the paramilitary organization of Albanians and the arrest of eight members, including a former PDP official, with suspicion that it was meant to coincide with trials of Albanians in Kosovo and that the jailed individuals are victims of political machinations by the governing coalition.

"In anticipation of the second parliamentary elections, the NPD is already thinking of more advantageous electoral results. Some of its positions expressed ealier can now be realized in view of the great political schism in the largest ethnic Albanian party, the PDP. Thus, the NPD reiterates that the membership of the PDP in the governing coalition (the NPD is not in the governing coalition although its only parliamentary representative is in the coalition group PDP-NPD) presents a defeat and a great political mistake because 'from that government, the Albanian people endure not only discrimination, but also stern repression.'" This leaves the question of whether the NPD will cooperate with the PDP in the November elections in doubt.

Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia

A 1,200-word article by Aleksandar Damovski appears on page 4 of the 7 February issue, headlined "Lost Coordinates."

"'The idea of forming our party arose about May or June 1990, when many political parties were being formed in Macedonia and the Bolshevik system was collapsing. But, at that time, the Serbs in Macedonia were not able to assemble to form a party. There was eagerness among the people. The old regime was still apreading indoctrination and embraced the ethnic freedom of the Serbs in Macedonia....yielding to international public opinion, international media, and domestic opinion, the government decided to register our party on 16 March 1992.'"

"In the above statement, Boro Ristic, then chairman of the Democratic Party of Serbs (DPS), answered the question about the origins of the party in the first issue of SRPSKA REC, a bulletin of the city committee of the Association of Serbs and Montenegrins in Macedonia." The founding of the party was accompanied by the marketing of the idea of a threat of "'national and spiritual annihilation.'"

The DPS's policies have been complicated by the fact that the party "has constantly been turning for guidance toward the north," that is, toward Serbia. One sign of this is that the party leadership cooperates with representatives of the Serbian media in Skopje, rather than with the Macedonian media. The author continues that as a result of the party's activities, there have been direct clashes between the police and a militant section of the party. The conflicts frequently occur in the village of Kuceviste in the Skopje region. Following an incident there on New Year's Eve, the DPS declared at a press conference that "to the extent that discrimination against the Serbs is not resolved in a democratic manner, we will be obliged to take measures to protect ourselves, among which we will consider help from our motherland." The party has also announced the forming of a crisis staff and the organization of a referendum to clarify Macedonia's status and the defining of the Serbs as a constitutent (state-forming) people. A day earlier, on 15 January, there were calls in Kuceviste: "Long Live Arkan!," "Long Live Seselj!," and "Serbia, Serbia!"

In such an atmosphere, the political evolution of the DPS was prolonged. Contacts were kept with Pahomije, the Serbian Orthodox Bishop in Vranje, and demands were made for religious services in Serbo-Croatian, even in villages with no Serbs. The party also expressed its dissatisfaction with the 1991 census, claiming that there were 200,000-300,000 Serbs in Macedonia, instead of the official count of about 40,000.

"A very unexpected development came in August 1993 when a representative of the Macedonian Government, Internal Affairs Minister Ljubomir Frckovski—whose resignation the DPS had demanded in the wake of the 'New Year's celebration' in Kuceviste—signed an agreement with DPS leader Ristic to resolve the disputed issue of the status of the Serbs in Macedonia. This was also under the auspices of Gerd Ahrens, who was responsible for ethnic issues in the framework of the Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. One of the principal demands of the DPS was the inclusion of the Serbs in the Constitution as a nation; this was to be accomplished in 18 months." The agreement was soon denounced by "'a radical current.'" This group became stronger, and Ristic resigned, citing "'strong outside influence in the creation of party policy, especially by the Socialist Party and Radical Party, both from Serbia, as well as from the Serbian Orthodox Church, whose five senile seniors from the Holy Archepiscopal Synod are unable to recognize the existence of the Macedonian people, the Macedonian nation, and the Macedonian Orthodox Church."

"After the election of Dragisa Miletic as chairman of the DPS, and after the party's short-lived turning toward the real terrain where it found itself, the DPS returned to its old coordinates. Whereas it had used the word 'Macedonia,' it now employs only 'VJRM' [FYROM]; it does not respect basic human and religious rights. The press conferences are held only for journalists from the Serbian media who reside in Macedonia." Instead of entering the Constitution as a state-forming people, there are accusations of "'ethnic and spiritual annihilation and assimilation.'" For the new chairman, Miletic, "'The Serbs in Macedonia are part of a nation whose president is Slobodan Milosevic.'"

Conclusion

The final, 1,200-word, article in the series, by "V.R.," appears on 8 February on page 4, and is entitled "Losing Ground After the Elections."

"V.R." writes, the period from the beginning of 1990 until the first multiparty elections (November-December 1990) was the time for intensive registering of political parties. Seeing their chance in the pluralistic environment, some playing the card of democratic change, others appealing to national feelings, in all about 20 parties emerged with their own programs and candidates in the elections. The majority, however, did not succeed in securing a place for their representatives, either in the republic-level parliament or in the township councils." The process of establishing new parties did not end after the elections. On the contrary, many new parties were registered and there were cases in which internal disagreements or conflicts over ideas led to the formation of new parties with almost the same names. At least on paper, some 60 parties now exist.

One of the parties, which succeeded in winning two seats in the republic-level parliament, a party that has probably now been forgotten, according to the writer, by most Macedonians, is the Party of Yugoslavs. Today, their representatives in the assembly are Risto Kelesov, who won a majority in Kumanovo, and Risto Stamenov, a candidate for the party from Strumica. The party, which was registered at the end of May 1990, emphasized at the time of the elections the need to maintain the integrity of the Yugoslav federation. Since then, the Party of Yugoslavs has held two congresses, the first in May 1991 and the second in June 1993. At the second congress, the party issued a program and statute and changed its name to Party of Yugoslavs in Macedonia - Yugoslav Unionist Civic Alliance (PJM-JUGA). Political groupings with similar programs and names can be found today in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Hercegovina. Today, the main prescription of the party is reduced to pledging to restore the Yugoslav federation in some form with mutual recognition of all the former Yugoslav republics.

"In the short period between the first and second rounds of voting in the first multiparty elections, the so-called National Front, comprising four nationalist parties—the VMRO-DPMNE, MAAK, the People's Party of Macedonia (NPM), and the Party of Peasants of Macedonia—briefly entered the scene. Today, much is said about who profited and who lost in the formation of the Front during the period of nationalistic euphoria. The NPM evolved from the 'United Macedonians' Association, which was formed in February 1990. It held its first assembly the same day, 12 April 1990, that the Law on Political Parties was adopted. Its first, and as yet only, congress was held on 26 May 1991, and Vladimir Stefanovski was elected chairman. The new party chose the name People's Party of Macedonia at that time. According to Stefanovski, the NPM is nationalistic, but not national-chauvinistic. The NPM does not spread enmity toward others; it advocates love toward one's own nation." The NPM was the first to use the sun emblem which is now used on Macedonia's flag. Although the party now views joining the National Front as a mistake, it was the initiator of the front. In the first round of the elections, the NPM won 27,000 votes, or about two percent of the total votes cast, placing it in eighth place among the 19 competing parties. When its agreement with the National Front fell through, the NPM urged a boycott of the second round. Today, the NPM's membership is about 2,000.

"Another member of the National Front was the Democratic Union - Party of Peasants of Macedonia. Based in the village of Gorni Podlag in Kucani and Novo Selo in the Strumica region, the party was registered at the beginning of June 1990. Dimitar Galev was elected chairman." Disappointed at the election outcome and the short-lived National Front, the party seems inactive today.

"The first party to register on the pluralistic Macedonian scene was the Social Democratic Party of Macedonia. It came into being with great ambitions, above all for the promotion of social democracy in Macedonia and with a cadre of intellectuals who would make their debut in the elections. Slavko Milosavlevski was elected as the first chairman of the party." After the party's poor showing in the elections, it has become rather inactive. The current chairman is Tihomir Jovanovski.

The writer concludes, considering the still unresolved issues of party financing and opportunities for conducting electoral campaigns, the situation as Macedonia approaches the November elections appears fluid, with some 60 parties now competing for support.

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